

VI. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

In the early 1990s, representatives of the Baltimore County Department of Environmental Protection and Resource Management (DEPRM) had several meetings with the community to explain the significance of the microbiological and chemical quality of Seneca Creek and Frog Mortar Creek.

Residents were advised that approximately 80% of the more than 1,200 private

sewage disposal systems on the Bowleys Quarters peninsula were failing. These failing systems either discharged directly into the creeks and ground water or indirectly into storm drain system. As a result, the upper reaches of Seneca Creek and Frog Mortar Creek were considered unsafe for swimming since the water quality did not meet the microbiological standards established in state regulations. Records maintained by DEPRM indicate that these waters have been unsafe for recreational contact since 1965. However, the main channel and mouth of Seneca Creek which enters Chesapeake Bay has acceptable water quality.

The peninsula is undergoing the installation of a public sewage system to replace the marginal and failing private septic systems throughout the community. The public sewerage projects, once fully implemented, should reduce the health hazard and improve the water quality in Frog Mortar, Seneca and Galloway Creeks as well as Middle River and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay. However, the improvements should not be offset by over development of the area.

The Bowleys Quarters community desires to maintain the rural atmosphere that is enjoyed by residents, businesses, organizations and visitors. To achieve this, new residential structures should consist of high quality single family dwellings, built with open spaces surrounding the structures. Any reforestation requirements must be fulfilled within the Bowleys Quarters peninsula.

a. Sewerage

Failing private septic systems have contributed to the pollution of the surrounding waters. In some areas, pollution levels constitute a health hazard. On November 2, 1992, the Baltimore County Council adopted The Bowleys Quarters Community Action Plan which states; the proposed sewage collection systems will cover the entire community, utilizing gravity sewers on the upper peninsula and "grinder pump" pressure systems on the lower peninsula. The project, which initially was expected to be completed in 1997, is designed and constructed in stages. The first phase of construction started in April 1996, and the target date for the last phase of construction to begin, is October 2000.

Connections and "grinder pumps" if required, for unimproved properties will be subject to the requirements and standards of the 1999 growth management legislation. Right-of-way easements for force mains, collection laterals, pumping stations, individual "grinder pump" stations, etc. will be purchased from property owners by the County. The County will own and maintain the entire system. Property owners will pay for their "grinder pump" electrical power. "Grinder pump" stations will include alarms to alert the homeowner to call the County for service.

Issue: The failing private sewage disposal systems present a health hazard.

Action: The BQIA will support County efforts to have all existing dwellings connected by 2002.

In order to justify the system and monitor its performance, pollution levels of the surrounding waters must be continuously monitored and results made available to the community.

Issue: Water quality monitoring.

Action: DEPRM will continue water quality testing for bacteria during the recreational season and provide the results to the community.

Reliable grinder pumps will still require occasional maintenance. The project design and operation must encompass a reliable maintenance program with backup units and spare parts, where priority response is given to requests for service.

Issue: Quick response by the County to calls for service

Action: The County will monitor the cost of the grinder pumps and will perform a study to see if additional grinder pump suppliers will be allowed.

Action: The Department of Public Works will communicate the maintenance and response service program to the community and individual residents.

Project costs will be determined by contractor bids for each phase of the project. The County will finance the project by the sale of bonds and recover these costs from the community as follows:

One time "connection fee" of \$1,425 at time of hookup to the system.

Annual front foot "benefit assessment" for all improved and unimproved properties.

One time "deficit charge" for all improved and unimproved properties. These charges represent the property owners share of 50% of the total project cost not recovered by the front foot benefit assessment and other funding sources.

One time permit and plumbing costs of connecting the house to the system as negotiated between the homeowner and a plumber at the time of connection to the system.

Quarterly sewer service charge based on " actual water usage."

The connection fee, deficit charges, permit and plumbing costs can be spread over 40 years with a 4% annual interest charge. At the time of property transfer they continue on to the new owner, until fully paid. Low income property owners, as

defined by their County taxes, can fully defer these costs. At the time of transfer the new owner is responsible for the costs.

Issue: Installation costs to residents for public sewer service.

Action: DEPRM will investigate alternative financing through Federal, State and County grants.

b. Boater Pollution

The growing number and expansion of marinas represent a potential major pollution source. A joint effort by marina owners, BQIA, DNR and DEPRM is required to constantly alert boat owners of their legal and moral obligation to avoid disposal of litter and wastes into the waters. All marinas have boat holding tank pump out facilities.

Issue: Boater pollution.

Action: BQIA, DEPRM, DNR, and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation will meet with local marina owners to encourage adoption of the Maryland Clean Marina Guide. Invite local marina owners to come to a community meeting to discuss what they are doing to protect the environment. (BQIA).

Action: Yearly inspection of marinas by the County is recommended with additional follow up as required. (DEPRM/DNR).

Action: Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) will continue to implement a marina pump-out program. State cost share funding is available.

c. Litter

Dumping by non-licensed haulers is a constant problem at wooded areas located in Bowleys Quarters. The majority of this illegal dumping takes place at night away from witnesses. Everything possible must be done to prevent this illegal activity.

Issue: Litter from illegal dumping.

Action: The BQIA will discourage residents from using non-licensed haulers.

Action: The BQIA will publish a list of phone numbers and legal locations to dispose of trash for community awareness.

Action: The BQIA will encourage property owners to place gates across private dirt roads to discourage the illegal use of these sites.

Action: The BQIA will work with County agencies to have the area cleaned of trash.

Action: DEPRM will coordinate community clean-ups upon request.
(Periodically)

d. Storm Water Management/Sediment Control

Runoff is a major non-point source of pollution that will not be alleviated by proposed sewerage. County storm drains, commercial and agricultural runoff represent the largest sources. It is essential that this problem be given increased priority.

In response to actions recommended in the initial Bowleys Quarters Community Action Plan, DEPRM has initiated programs that will improve the control of non-point source pollution caused by storm drains and commercial and agricultural runoff.

The Carrolwood Manor water quality retrofit on Nollmeyer Road was completed in 1995. Additionally, DEPRM has identified storm drain outfall locations and storm drain outfall locations and storm water management facility locations.

Issue: Non-point source pollution caused by storm drains, commercial and agricultural runoff.

Action: DEPRM will enforce storm water management and sediment control requirements. (Continuous)

Action: DEPRM will complete the Middle River Water Quality Management Plan. The plan will include the watershed pollution loading model and a three dimensional hydrodynamic and estuarine water quality model.

e. Chesapeake Bay Critical Area

The Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Law, enacted in 1984, is the most far-reaching piece of legislation to address the adverse impacts that result from the use of land surrounding the Chesapeake Bay. The fundamentally conserving philosophy of the entire Critical Area Program is expressed by the three (3) basic goals in the Critical Area Law:

1. Minimize adverse impacts on water quality that result from pollutants that are discharged from structures or conveyances that have run off from surrounding lands.

2. Conserve fish, wildlife and plant habitat.
3. Establish land use policies for development in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area which accommodate growth and also address the fact that, even if pollution is controlled, the number, movement, and activities of persons in that area can create environmental impacts.

The Baltimore County Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program is not intended to prevent all future development. However, it is designed to protect the Chesapeake Bay by strictly regulating future growth so that harmful effects on water quality and plant, fish and wildlife habitats are prevented or reduced.

The framework for controlling future development or redevelopment is directly associated with the following three (3) Critical Area Classifications:

1. IDA - Intense Development Area
2. LDA - Limited Development Area
3. RCA - Resource Conservation Area

The Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program provides the definitions, states the purpose and provides the maps for supporting and identifying the location of these three (3) classifications in the Critical Area. Approximately 85% of the Bowleys Quarters community is within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area.

The mechanism for implementation of the Critical Area Program is provided by regulations that concern the following:

1. Zoning
2. Forestry
3. Development
4. Land Use
5. Grading and Sediment Control

The specific regulations that directly influence development in the study area are: strict buffer and setback requirements, restrictions on tree removal and restrictions on construction within the tidal and non-tidal wetlands and habitat protection areas.

It is also the policy of Baltimore County through the Baltimore County Master Plan to continue implementing the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program.

In order to protect or enhance the urban, rural land use, plant and wildlife habitats and water quality, the Bowleys Quarters Community Action Plan supports the following to the fullest extent:

1. Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Law
2. Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Criteria
3. Baltimore County Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program
4. Baltimore County Master Plan

Issue: Critical Area - County Growth Allocation Process

Action: BQIA will monitor Growth Allocation applications and will submit testimony in cases not consistent with the goals of this plan.
(Continuous)

Action: BQIA will request enforcement of all Critical Area regulations.
(Continuous)